



The Mountain-Prairie Review

[Http://mountain-prairie.fws.gov/ea](http://mountain-prairie.fws.gov/ea)

December 2002

Regional Office CFC Campaign A Hit!

By Dan Sobieck, 2002 CFC Campaign Chairman

Using a two-pronged approach, the 2002 Combined Federal Campaign in the Regional Office was a runaway success this year. At times fun, serious and delicious, the end result was the raising of awareness and resources for charities throughout the Denver metro area.

"This was great campaign," said Deputy Regional Director John Blankenship, one of the many "talented" actors who participated in the CFC kickoff skit (Editors Advisory: hang on to your day jobs folks). "The chili contest and tasting and basket raffles were a great way to bring people together for a great cause."

Phase one of the campaign on October 31 featured an original skit, performed by John Blankenship, Paul Gertler, Mike Stempel, Rick Coleman, Sharon Rose, Matt Kales, Peggy Farnum, Heather Gonzalez and Chris Hanson. Complementing the skits were speakers from two local charities.

Phase two of the campaign on November 13 featured a chili contest and tasting, a basket raffle (see sidebar on page 2) and five booths from local charities. Contest judges Ralph Morgenweck, Jill Parker, and David Redhorse performed admirably as they worked through 16 tasty chili entries, carefully evaluated the merits of each and declared champions in both the "regular" and "vegetarian" categories.

Nearly \$1,200 was raised during the kickoff events and donated to CFC. Thanks goes out to all the donors, keyworkers and other volunteers who helped make this year's campaign a success. Special thanks to Jean Clemens and Heather Horton for their contagious enthusiasm and coordination efforts. A total of \$43,774.00 was donated by Service employees by the close of the 2002 Campaign.



From left: Dan Sobieck, Mike Stempel, Peggy Farnum, Matt Kales, John Blankenship, Heather Gonzalez, and Paul Gertler



Happy Holidays



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Media Corner

News Media: Preparing a News Release

By Debbie Felker, Colorado River Info & Edu Coordinator



If your story meets the definition of “news” as explained in last month’s newsletter, it’s time to prepare a news release that will “sell” your story to the media. The news release is your tool to convince an editor to send a reporter and/or photographer to tell *your* story instead of someone else’s. When developing content, present your message in terms that will catch an editor’s attention. Use a catchy headline. When possible, highlight visual aspects of your story that would make good photos.

There are many news release formats. Samples and the Service’s current standard closing paragraph appear on the Office of External Affairs’ website: <http://mountain-prairie.fws.gov/ea>. If preparing a release about a plant species, two paragraphs that must be included are also posted to this website.

Whatever format you select, follow these simple rules:

News releases should be short - one to two pages in length - and double-spaced. Releases should always include the date it was prepared, a contact person(s) name and phone number (make sure you give a number where someone will always answer - few things frustrate reporter more than receiving a news release and then not being able to reach anyone if they have questions), a headline, several paragraphs that explain the story (including who, what, when, where, why and how) and the Fish and Wildlife Service’s standard closing paragraph.

Use simple, clear language. Explain scientific and technical terms in language that a sixth-grader can understand. NEVER use acronyms or abbreviations without first explaining them, i.e., U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) or Endangered Species Act (ESA).

Editor’s Note: Basic news release such as those described above should not contain policy statements or discuss controversial issues. If you have a sensitive issue, please contact your public affairs specialist in the Office of External Affairs.

Next month: Know the Media and Their Deadlines.

CFC Chili Cookoff & Theme Basket Winners

By Heather Horton, Realty

Here is the official list of your winners from the 2002 CFC Chili Cookoff and Basket Drawings:

1st Place (Meat Chili) - Donna Lakamp with “Southern Chili”
Runner Up (Meat Chili) - Heather Horton with “Italian Sausage Chili”

1st Place (Vegetarian Chili) - Laura Stevens with “Hobo Chili”
Runner Up (Vegetarian Chili) - Robert Benton with “Karen’s Best New Year Chili”

And, our 2002 Theme Basket winners were:

Outdoor Basket- Mary Nelson, (Ecological Services)
Girl’s Basket- Jacque Richy (Migratory Birds)
Boy’s Basket- Rick Coleman (Refuges)
Relaxation Basket- Margaret Wolf (Law Enforcement)
Baking Basket- Heather Gonzalez, (Information Technology)
Cat Lover’s Basket -Chuck Davis (Ecological Services)
Dog Lover’s Basket- Laura Stevens (Refuges)
Pasta Lover’s Basket- Carolyn Gulzow (Realty)
Coffee Lover’s Basket- Judy Steffel (Ecological Services)
Tea Lover’s Basket- Marilyn Mills (Budget)
Chocolate Lover’s- Sean Fields (Refuges)
Movie Lover’s- Laura Stevens (Refuges)
Green Thumb Basket- Donna Lakamp (Law Enforcement)

Thank you to all who participated and brought tickets! The Combined Federal Campaign couldn’t have done it without you!



Celebrating a Century of Conservation



Final Countdown to the National Wildlife Refuge System Centennial

By Melvie Uhland, Division of Education and Visitor Services

With the kick-off of the National Wildlife Refuge System Centennial less than three months away, look for the unveiling of the following Centennial projects.

On March 14, 2003:

- Centennial Birthday Celebration at Pelican Island - President and Mrs. Bush are expected to be the honorary guests.
- Centennial Birthday Celebration Open Houses at all National Wildlife Refuges - each Refuge will be hosting an open house and display of their time capsule project.
- Opening of the Smithsonian Institution's Exhibit on the significance of the National Wildlife Refuge System to the nation's heritage of wildlife conservation.
- Commemorative Postage Stamp Series - many refuges will be offering cancellation stations to coincide with the release of the commemorative stamps.

Throughout the year:

- Special events that combine the Centennial celebration with the celebration of International Migratory Bird Day, Earth Day, National Hunting and Fishing Day, etc.
- Commemorative "coffee table" books and guidebooks that focus on Refuge System opportunities will be published.
- Exhibitions at various zoos and aquaria around the nation. The National Zoo's special exhibit will highlight endangered species recovery and migratory bird conservation.
- Habitat restoration projects, funded by Refuges, the North American Waterfowl Management Plan program, and corporate and conservation sponsors will be occurring on select Refuges nationwide.

In November 2003:

- The National Wildlife Refuge System Conference will be held to both celebrate the System's first century and to build a vision for conservation for the next century.

FAST FACTS

Over 960,000 acres of land have been protected due to the efforts of the Wildlife Habitat Acquisition Offices in Aberdeen and Huron, South Dakota. These acquisitions are made under the authority of the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Act of 1,934, whose primary purpose is to acquire lands to benefit waterfowl production. Each year the office spends between \$5 to \$7 million on acquisition, playing a crucial role in the future of wildlife in the region.

Regional Employees Assist Saratoga NFH

By Matt Kales, External Affairs

Eighteen Service employee from 11 different stations, as well as several volunteers from Estes Park,



Colorado, traveled to Saratoga National Fish Hatchery in southern Wyoming this past October to assist the station with annual fall lake and brown trout spawning activities. Personnel from a variety of programs, ranging from Budget and Administration to Ecological Services to Refuges, traveling from as far away as South Dakota, helped produce nearly 9.5 million lake trout eggs and nearly 4.5 million brown trout eggs. The eggs, which are provided to the Great Lakes Restoration Program and State, Tribal, and Federal fisheries program nationwide, respectively, contribute significantly to sportfishing opportunities in Wyoming and across the United States.

In exchange for their efforts, participating personnel were able to experience, first-hand, the labor-intensive and exacting process by which Saratoga NFH produces eggs and gain a greater appreciation for all of the hard work that goes into delivering such a high-quality product. As the Service's Fisheries Program prepares to roll out a new strategic initiative, it is critical that all Service employees understand the mission of the Fisheries Program; spending a few days "squeezing fish" is an effective way to better understand this mission.

Participating personnel were also treated to some great scenery (made even more so by an early-season snowstorm) and warm hospitality by station staff. Next October's spawning activities at Saratoga are only 10 short months away, and the hatchery will likely again be looking for assistance, so mark your calendars and plan on lending a hand!



Photos by Bob Green

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Director Steve Williams visits Bear River Refuge, Utah on October 14th.

The National Bison Range Events



Kym Murphy, Corporate Vice President of Environmental Policy for Walt Disney Company, (right) congratulates local rancher Grant Horde during a special presentation at the annual round-up at the National Bison Range marking Horde's 50th year of attendance.



National Bison Range staff and volunteer riders move animals from cutting pen for counting and health monitoring during annual bison round-up.

Regional Maintenance Workshop

By Bob Barrett, Refuges

Over 70 maintenance employees representing each Refuge and Fisheries station, participated in the first regionwide workshop ever held, with the theme "Meeting our Maintenance Challenges for Fish and Wildlife Resources." The 4-day workshop included presentations by regional office staff, heavy equipment companies, and disease experts on a variety of topics, from contracting and personnel, to safety and weed management. A highlight of the week was a hands-on field day with displays and demonstrations of graders, loaders, ATVs and other construction and farming equipment from over a half dozen manufacturers.

The workshop also included discussions with regional office managers on current issues affecting maintenance workers. As a result, an advisors committee from each station was established to address communication and other important issues. It was also decided that all wage grade employees will be provided with access to a Service computer and an e-mail address; load securement training will be provided to wage grade employees by March 2003; and new guidance will state that no employee will operate heavy equipment unless they are certified to safely operate this equipment.

The workshop was hosted in Valentine, Nebraska, by Project Leader Royce Huber and staff from Fort Niobrara/Valentine NWRs, who provided refuge tours at the end of the week.



A Project Worth Doing

By Bob Timberman, Biologist, PFW Program

Somewhere in Colorado..the local Conservation District (CD) board members are listening to the areas Partners for Fish and Wildlife (PFW) biologist. The biologist explains the benefits of forming a partnership. These benefits will make everyones dollars go further, and effectively doubles the on the ground habitat gains.

Primary habitats to be enriched are shallow/seasonal wetlands, and riparian zones with perennial flows. We put in 50%, you add 25%, the landowner puts in 25% - we all get more bang for the buck -- a 20 year management agreement is signed... shorebirds, waterfowl, and herps can't lose. The CD signs what amounts to a handshake on paper with the PFW Program; it's more than enough.

The CD advertises the "new" program in its local media outlets. Interested area landowners make the call to *their* CD office, they speak to a familiar voice. The CD compiles a list of potential projects. All projects are viewed by the PFW biologist, any CD folks who want to attend, and typically a Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) employee. The more the merrier; it is after all a partnership.

As the project are looked at, some are turned down on the spot. Not all project potentials can be Townsendia annua Beamans. Even though one might have to kiss a few Rana pipens - it's often worth the wait. At times, up to 75% of the potential projects are turned down by the biologist. Landowners are always given other program options to pursue, and often times come back with a better proposal at a later date. The concept is to view a large number of projects while educating the public and other agency folks on what works best, say no as needed in a firm but pleasant way, and keep doing what's best for the resource.

Once a project is accepted the work begins. Survey, design, and permitting - only to name a few. The landowner obtains contractor bids to determine who will be working for him/her. With the project costs now known, the Wildlife Extension Agreement is signed. The agreement assures no surprises are forthcoming for landowner or agency. All the cards are on the table.

From the initial handshake with the private landowner, to later surveying for wildlife use, the biologist was there. Not simply one part of a larger program, but rather a constant component in a habitat project completion. It's all about getting the funds here in Colorado, the funds from Great Outdoors Colorado, Colorado Division of Wildlife, Ducks Unlimited, and others - to the ground on quality, cost effective wildlife habitat projects. It's all about "A Project Worth Doing."

Copy and Paste up to twelve Pieces of Informaton at Once

By Heather Gonzalez, ITM



If you're constantly copying text and data between different Office programs, here's a way to save time by copying multiple items at once.

For example, you can copy a chart in Microsoft Excel, switch to Microsoft Power Point and copy a bulleted list, switch to Microsoft Internet Explorer and copy a page of text, and then switch to Microsoft word and paste the collection of copied items into your document.

Here's how:

1. In any Office program, on the View menu, point to Toolbars and click Clipboard to display the Office Clipboard.
2. Select an item you want to copy.
3. Copy the item into the Office Clipboard by clicking Copy on the Edit menu or clicking the Copy button on the Clipboard toolbar.
4. Repeat steps two through four until you have copied all the items (up to 12) you want. If the item you want to copy is in another program, switch to that program first.
5. In an Office program, click where you want to paste the items.
6. To paste all the items at once, Click Paste All on the Clipboard toolbar. Or to paste the items one at a time, click the icon for the item you want to paste.

Note: You can copy items while using any program that provides copy and cut funtionality, but you can paste items only into Microsoft Access, Excel, Microsoft Outlook, PowerPoint , or Word.



Book Review: *Wayne Aspinall and the Shaping of the American West*

Written by Steven C. Shulte

Reviewed by Matt Kales, External Affairs

This book review is the first in an occasional series of reviews of books, both new and classic, about environmental and natural resource issues, with a focus on issues that affect the Mountain-Prairie Region.

Now that the smoke has cleared and the results of last month's elections are final, we can pause and consider the unique political landscape here in the Mountain-Prairie Region, a place that comprises 20% of the total land area of the United States of America, yet contains only 4% of the nation's population, which translates into a mere 37 seats in Congress. This paradox is nothing new; the West has long been, and, despite recent growth, will likely continue to be a lightly populated region compared with the coastal parts of our country. However, this low numeric presence in Congress has historically been offset by the fact that the individuals who have represented the West in Washington more often than not chair Congressional Committees, the actions and jurisdictions of which directly affect life in this region, most notably in terms of how natural resources are managed.

The career of Wayne Aspinall, who represented Colorado's resource-rich but sparsely inhabited Western Slope from 1949 to 1973, and who served as chairman of the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee for the majority of that period, both illustrates this paradox and demonstrates how effective leadership can eclipse demographics in the political process and in so doing, shape national policy. Aspinall, who was raised in the Grand Valley in western Colorado, was instrumental in forging the outcome of many seminal (and highly controversial) environmental issues, including the Echo Park Dam, the Wilderness Act, and the Central Arizona Project. Through these, and other issues, many of them involving western water management, Aspinall helped forge the framework for the national debate on environmental policy in the latter part of the twentieth century and in so doing, played a major role in "shaping" this region.

Steven Schulte, a professor of history at Mesa State College in Grand Junction, Colorado, the heart of Aspinall country, does an outstanding job of tracing Aspinall's formative political experiences in the Grand Valley and how those experiences permanently colored Aspinall's perspective on resource use, especially water. Nicely balancing the telling of biographical fact with insights into contemporary historical, geographic, and political context, Schulte's book on the life and times of Wayne Aspinall should be required reading for anyone seeking an enhanced understanding of environmental issues in the West, and how those issues have, in turn, influenced national environmental policy.



ABC correspondent Bill Redecker interviews Project Leader Dean Rundle at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge for a prime time story on ABC Nightly News with Peter Jennings, as producer Kevins Watters looks on. The interview, conducted at the handicapped accessible pier on Lake Mary, focussed on important benefits to wildlife and the public in the Denver metropolitan area resulting from conversion of the 27-square-mile military cleanup site to a 17,000-acre urban wildlife refuge.

Man Weaves into New Hobby

By Meranda Van Ningen
The Forum- 10/25/02

MOFFIT, ND - Like several North Dakota men, Paul Van Ningen is interested in hunting, fishing, sports and almost every outdoor activity.

Entering his home, it is obvious that he takes pride in his huge hunting trophies. There is another talent that is easy to spot throughout his home. Willow baskets are everywhere, and he's made them all.

In 1978, Van Ningen was attending college at South Dakota State University and a good friend talked him into attending a seminar. The friend had learned how to weave willows from residents of the Hutterite colony near his hometown in exchange for their use of willows on his land. Van Ningen became interested in the craft and was able to pick up the technique after a few attempts.

After graduating college, he moved near Carrington, ND. He works for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and his career centers on protecting wildlife, so collecting willows gave him another reason to be out in the prairie. During the fall months, when the weather is just right and willows are ready to harvest, he takes the time to pick up a good supply of colorful branches for his upcoming projects. He has lived in a number of North Dakota communities, but no matter where he has moved has always been able to find a good supply of branch colors.

"They come in all different colors. It just depends on what type of willow tree you are able to get to," Van Ningen said. "You'll find many colors, depending on the type of willow and what type of soil they're in."

Once he has cut the willows, he sorts them by length and diameter. A rubber band is the only other tool he needs before he starts weaving. His usual project is the size of a laundry basket. This will keep him busy for a good four hours.

"Shaping the basket is the hardest part," he said. "It is important that they weave the way that you want them to or the basket will turn out uneven. Once you get that down then the rest is pretty easy."

Van Ningen said it's a good idea to know what you will do with the different colors of willows before starting to weave.

"Sometimes baskets look great with a strip of color through the basket and others look good with a mix of many colors throughout," he said.



Since learning the skill, Van Ningen believes he has put together about 350 baskets. Most end up being gifts for friends and family, and he has also sold some. Back when he started, Van Ningen priced a large laundry basket size at about \$25. "I would probably get close to \$40 now," he said.

Van Ningen remembers a craft fair to which he brought 20 baskets to sell. As he was setting up, many of the people at other booths were interested in the baskets and started to buy them. By the time the fair started, he didn't have anything to sell. A woman came over and wanted to know if he would be interested in consigning

with her. He was very flattered by the offer, but felt it would no longer be a hobby if he took it up as a job.

Instead, he has spent time teaching his three sons the hobby. "I taught the older two when they were around 15. My youngest started learning when he was closer to 11," he said. The two older boys live in Fargo and their homes also show that they have taken to the hobby.

Although a man of few words, a hint of pride shines through on Van Ningen's face when examining his work. His baskets may not be the most obvious talent – like the big-game trophies on his wall – but it is the one he can most easily share with others.

Meranda Van Ningen is a communication student at North Dakota State University and she happens to be Paul Van Ningen's daughter-in-law. She wrote this story for a journalism class.

QUOTES

It has often been said
there's so much to be read,
you never can cram
all those words in your head.

So the writer who breeds
more words than he needs
is making a chore
for the reader who reads.

That's why my belief is
the briefer the brief is,
the greater the sigh
of the reader's relief is.

— Dr. Seuss

View from the RD's Office

By Ralph Morgenweck, RD R6

Looking back on the last year, I have been very impressed with what we have accomplished. By now, everyone (including myself) has gone through their annual evaluation process and reviewed their accomplishments for FY 2003. Inevitably, I'm pleasantly surprised when our collective efforts are gathered in one place, for they are impressive - thank you.

We've also got big plans for the coming year - with national Fisheries and Refuges Centennial conferences leading the way.

Regionally, I like how we are positioned for 2004. Our new ARDs in Ecological Services and Fisheries and our new Refuge Chief are in place and adding new ideas, new energy and a fresh perspective to our regional operations. These are good things, for while it's clear our mission remains the same, the methods used to accomplish our mission are constantly evolving. In fact, adaptability may be the only tool which remains a constant.

We have proven we are adaptable, and it's clear this quality will be constant demand in the coming year. The ability to leap tall buildings in a single bound would be helpful as well, as there are hurdles ahead - budgeting, legal challenges to Service positions, water allocation issues, habitat encroachment - but we have met and overcome all of these obstacles before and I know we will do the same in the future.

I wish everyone a safe and happy Holiday Season and I look forward to another great year in 2004.

Congressional Affairs

By Matt Kales, External Affairs

November General Election Results for the MP Region

The Congressional landscape in the Mountain-Prairie Region did not undergo a dramatic transformation as a result of last month's general election. Party representation remains largely the same as before the election, and many familiar faces in the Senate and House of Representatives will retain their seats for the next six and two years, respectively. The most closely contested Senate races in our region, the Allard/Strickland race in Colorado and the Johnson/Thune race in South Dakota, both went to the incumbents, while the tightest House race, the Bueauprez/Feeley match-up in the newly established 7th District of Colorado, is still undecided at present, (a recount is currently underway).

Perhaps the most significant change in the region's political infrastructure is the retirement of Representative James Hansen, of Utah's District 1, Chair of the House Resources Committee, which is the Service's authorizing committee (and the committee with jurisdiction over the Endangered Species Act and other statutes relevant to the Service). With Mr. Hansen's retirement from office, the chair of this committee will go to a representative from another state and most likely, another region.

Lastly, the Mountain-Prairie Region has three new governors: Kathleen Sebelius (D) in Kansas; Michael Rounds (R) in South Dakota; and, David Freudenthal (D) in Wyoming.

Native American Affairs

By David Redhorse, EA

Tribal Commission

The Montana-Wyoming Tribal Fish and Wildlife Commission recently met to share each member's efforts to conserve and protect tribal resources. Common themes were lack of tribal wildlife resources conservation funds and the strong dedication and commitment demonstrated by tribal staff.

The tribes of Ft. Belknap typified Commission members. They continually seek grants. Currently they are proposing to develop a wildlife management plan under Montana's partnership programs with tribes. For their conservation officers, they utilize a Community Oriented Policing Services grant. The major part of their tribal wildlife management efforts is supported with sales of permits and licenses under their hunting program. For example, 100 antelope permits were sold for \$600 each.

The tribes of Wind River cited advantages of a Service field office located nearby. The proximity resulted in an excellent partnership, and they can readily use Service fish and wildlife professionals. The Service is assisting with a carrying capacity survey of tribal lands for wildlife. In addition funds under the fish passage program are being used to improve irrigation structures that can prevent fish from ending up in the fields.

Other Commission tribes also are working hard for their wildlife programs. All are facing drought situations similar to the tribes of Ft. Peck, where drying tribal lakes and ponds have resulted in fish kills. All desire to know more about the chronic wasting disease, as well as other wildlife health issues. And all are looking forward to their next opportunity to talk about their program in March 2003.

The Mountain-Prairie Review is a monthly publication produced by the USFWS Region 6 External Affairs Office. Publisher: Ralph Morgenweck, Regional Director; Editor: Dan Sobieck, ARD-EA; Staff Writers: Karen Miranda Gleason, Matt Kales, Diane Katzenberger, David Redhorse, Sharon Rose; Design and Layout: Heather Gonzalez, IRM/ Jean Clemens, EA. All contributions from Region 6 employees are welcomed and will be considered for publication.